

VETERANS NEWS

Contact: JP Tremblay
Jerry Jones
Jaime Arteaga
Legislation and Public Affairs
916-653-2192
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Governor Signs Much Needed Legislation Benefiting Veterans

Secretary Johnson today praised Governor Schwarzenegger for recognizing the needs of today's veterans by signing legislation that acknowledges their many contributions to our nation. In an announcement from his office, Governor Schwarzenegger announced he has signed [SB 1401](#) by Senator Joe Simitian (D- Palo Alto) and [AB 3083](#) by the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs. These measures will extend mental health services to veterans and assist veterans in getting screened for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury.

"Governor Schwarzenegger has once more demonstrated his commitment to our nation's heroes, our veterans," said Tom Johnson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "By signing these bills, the governor is responding to the special needs of veterans and their families."

The Governor also signed SB 1675 on September 25, 2008. SB 1675 by Senator Dave Cox (R-Fair Oaks) provides that a Resolution of Issuance approved by the Veterans' Debenture Finance Committee may give the Department of Veterans Affairs the discretion to structure the terms and conditions of any issuance of Revenue Bonds for the CalVet Home Loan Program.

Among the bills signed by Governor Schwarzenegger which benefit veterans are:

[SB 1401](#) by Senator Joe Simitian (D- Palo Alto) requires the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Military Department to develop plans to reach out to Guard members or veterans returning to California from combat and assist them in obtaining a screening for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury.

[AB 3083](#) by the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), in conjunction with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), to seek all available federal funding for mental health services for veterans. The bill also extends mental health services provided by the Adult and Older Adult Mental Health System of Care Act to include veterans, and requires counties to provide mental health services to veterans to the extent such services are available to other adults. The bill defines a serious mental disorder or illness (SMI) to include bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and requires DMH to include services for veterans within target population service standards.

[SB 1353](#) by Senator Gloria Negrete McLeod (D-Montclair) authorizes a state employee who is a member of the National Guard or Reserves to receive specified compensation benefits for four additional years, if ordered to serve on and after September 11, 2001, as a result of the War on Terrorism.

[SB 1534](#) by Senator Jim Battin (R- La Quinta) authorizes uniformed public safety personnel in California to wear decorations or medals authorized by the Military and Veterans Code, the U.S. Armed Forces, the

National Guard or the Military Reserve or Naval Militia on and around Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

[AB 190](#) by Assembly Speaker Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) authorizes, after local approval, veterans whose vehicles display one number of military special-recognition license plates to park in metered parking spaces without charge.

[AB 2049](#) by Assemblymember Lori Saldaña (D-San Diego) requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a task force to review and make recommendations regarding the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and to report to the Legislature by January 1, 2009.

[AB 3065](#) by the Committee on Veterans Affairs enables veterans who have retired from active military service, were honorably discharged from active duty with a service-connected disability or honorably discharged from active duty to apply for state civil service promotional examinations.

[SB 1495](#) by Senator Christine Kehoe (D-San Diego) allows a taxpayer to retain the disabled veteran's property tax exemption in the case of a partial loss of the taxpayer's home due to a misfortune or calamity, and a full or partial loss due to a major disaster for which the governor has declared a state of emergency.

Yesterday, Governor Schwarzenegger announced he has signed [AB 2171](#) by Assemblymember Paul Cook (R-Yucca Valley) which begins the process towards the construction of the Purple Heart Memorial in State Capitol Park in Sacramento.

Last week the Governor announced the signing of [SB 1455](#) by Senator Dave Cogdill (R-Modesto), which authorizes the creation of the Gold Star Family License Plate and allows a family member of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces killed on active duty to apply for the plate containing a gold star and the words "Gold Star Family." As a token of the state's appreciation for their sacrifice, the bill provides a special waiver of fees for Gold Star Families.

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